

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JUNE 1989

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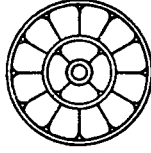
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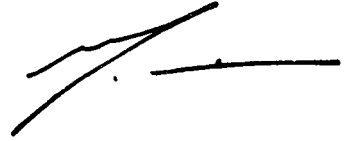
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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TWO TALKS BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 4 JUNE 1958

“At first this truth of the spirit and of spirituality is not self-evident to the mind, man becomes mentally aware of his soul as something other than his body, superior to his normal mind and life, but he has no clear sense of it, only a feeling of some of its effects on his nature. As these effects take a mental form or a life-form, the difference is not firmly and trenchantly drawn, the soul-perception does not acquire a distinct and assured independence. Very commonly indeed, a complex of half-effects of the psychic pressure on the mental and vital parts, a formation mixed with mental aspiration and vital desires, is mistaken for the soul, just as the separative ego is taken for the self, although the self in its true being is universal as well as individual in its essence,—or just as a mixture of mental aspiration and vital enthusiasm and ardour uplifted by some kind of strong or high belief or self-dedication or altruistic eagerness is mistaken for spirituality. But this vagueness and these confusions are inevitable as a temporary stage of the evolution which, because ignorance is its starting-point and the whole stamp of our first nature, must necessarily begin with an imperfect intuitive perception and an instinctive urge or seeking without any acquired experience or clear knowledge. Even the formations which are the first effects of the perception or urge or the first indices of a spiritual evolution, must inevitably be of this incomplete and tentative nature. But the error so created comes very much in the way of a true understanding, and it must therefore be emphasised that spirituality is not a high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience. These things are of considerable value to mind and life, they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying or giving a suitable form to the nature; but they still belong to the mental evolution,—the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience, change is not yet there. Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature.”

The Life Divine, pp. 856-57

IN fact, so long as there is any doubt or hesitation, so long as one asks oneself the question of whether one has or hasn't realised this eternal soul in oneself, it proves the *true* contact has not taken place. For, when the phenomenon occurs, it brings with it an inexpressible something, so new and so definitive, that doubt and questioning are no longer possible. It is truly, in the absolute sense of the phrase, a new birth.

You become a new person, and whatever may be the path or the difficulties of the path afterwards, that feeling never leaves you. It is not even something—like many other experiences—which withdraws, passes into the background, leaving you externally with a kind of vague memory to which it is difficult to cling, whose remembrance grows faint, blurred—it is not that. You *are* a new person and definitively that, whatever happens. And even all the incapacity of the mind, all the difficulties of the vital, all the inertia of the physical are unable to change this new state—a new state which makes a *decisive* break in the life of the consciousness. The being one was before and the being one is after, are no longer the same. The position one has in the universe and in relation to it, in life and in relation to it, in understanding and in relation to it, is no longer the same: it is a true reversal which can never be undone again. That is why when people tell me, "I would like to know whether I am in contact with my soul or not", I say, "If you ask the question, that is enough to prove that you are not. You don't need an answer, you are giving it to yourself." When it is *that*, it is that, and then it is finished, it is no longer anything else.

And since we are speaking of that, I shall remind you of what Sri Aurobindo has said, repeated, written, affirmed and said over and over again, that his yoga, the integral yoga, can begin *only after* that experience, not before.

So, one must not cherish any illusions and fancy that one can begin to know what the supermind is and form any idea of it or assess it in any way, however minimal, before having had *that* experience.

Therefore, if you want to advance on the path, you must very modestly start on your way towards the new birth, first, and realise it before cherishing the illusion that you can have supramental experiences.

To console you I may tell you that by the very fact that you live on earth at this time—whether you are conscious of it or not, even whether you want it or not—you are absorbing with the air you breathe this new supramental substance which is now spreading in the earth atmosphere. And it is preparing things in you which will manifest *very suddenly*, as soon as you have taken the decisive step.

(*Silence*)

Whether this will help you to take the decisive step or not is another question which remains to be studied, for the experiences which are occurring and will occur more and more frequently now, being of a radically new kind, we

can't know beforehand what is going to happen; we must study, and after a thorough study we shall be able to say with certainty whether this supramental substance makes the work of new birth easier or not.... I shall tell you this a little later. For the moment it is better not to rely on these things and, very simply, to start on your way to be born into the spiritual life.

When this happens to you, almost all the questions you ask yourself or ask me will be solved.

And anyway, your attitude to life will be so different that you will understand what is meant when one speaks of living spiritually. And at that moment you will also understand a *great* thing, a very great thing: how to live without ego.

Until then, you cannot understand it. The whole of life is so dependent on the ego that it seems absolutely impossible to live and act except with or by the ego, but after this new birth you can look at the ego with a smile and say to it, "My friend, I don't need you any more."

This is also one of the results which brings you a very decisive sense of liberation.

11 June 1958

"When there is the decisive emergence, one sign of it is the status or action in us of an inherent, intrinsic, self-existent consciousness which knows itself by the mere fact of being, knows all that is in itself in the same way, by identity with it, begins even to see all that to our mind seems external in the same manner, by a movement of identity or by an intrinsic direct consciousness which envelops, penetrates, enters into its object, discovers itself in the object, is aware in it of something that is not mind or life or body. There is, then, evidently a spiritual consciousness which is other than the mental, and it testifies to the existence of a spiritual being in us which is other than our surface mental personality."

The Life Divine, p. 855

Sweet Mother, is there a spiritual being in everybody?

That depends on what we call "being". If for "being" we substitute "presence", yes, there is a spiritual presence in everyone. If we call "being" an organised entity, fully conscious of itself, independent, and having the power of asserting itself and ruling the rest of the nature—no! The possibility of this independent and all-powerful being is in everybody, but the realisation is the result of long efforts which sometimes extend over many lives.

In everyone, even at the very beginning, this spiritual presence, this inner light is there.... In fact, it is everywhere. I have seen it many a time in certain

animals. It is like a shining point which is the basis of a certain control and protection, something which, even in half-consciousness, makes possible a certain harmony with the rest of creation so that irreparable catastrophes may not be constant and general. Without this presence the disorder created by the violences and passions of the vital would be so great that at any moment they could bring about a general catastrophe, a sort of total destruction which would prevent the progress of Nature. That presence, that spiritual light—which could almost be called a spiritual consciousness—is within each being and all things, and because of it, in spite of all discordance, all passion, all violence, there is a minimum of general harmony which allows Nature's work to be accomplished.

And this presence becomes quite obvious in the human being, even the most rudimentary. Even in the most monstrous human being, in one who gives the impression of being an incarnation of a devil or a monster, there is something within exercising a sort of irresistible control—even in the worst, some things are impossible. And without this presence, if the being were controlled exclusively by the adverse forces, the forces of the vital, this impossibility would not exist.

Each time a wave of these monstrous adverse forces sweeps over the earth, one feels that nothing can ever stop the disorder and horror from spreading, and always, at a certain time, unexpectedly and inexplicably a control intervenes, and the wave is arrested, the catastrophe is not total. And this is because of the Presence, the supreme Presence, in matter.

But only in a few exceptional beings and after a long, very long work of preparation extending over many, many lives does this Presence change into a conscious, independent, fully organised being, all-powerful master of his dwelling-place, conscious enough, powerful enough, to be able to control not only this dwelling but what surrounds it and in a field of radiation and action that is more and more extensive .. and effective

(*Questions and Answers 1958*, pp 335-40)

CORRECTION

At the end of "Vidyapati—The Bandit" in the May issue there should have been the line: *Translated by Jhumur from the Bengali.*

THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

IN THE LIGHT OF HER *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS*

(Continued from the issue of May 1989)

THE spirit of the modern age demands a new gospel, mankind needs and awaits a fresh revelation. The world and life are not to be deemed illusions. They are as real as the pure spirit itself. Spirit and matter are not antinomies. To think them as such is an illusion. They are both realities which seek expression. That expression is the mission in which the Mother participates. She is the divine instrument to execute the work of transformation in the terrestrial evolution and of divine fulfilment in earthly existence. She sees pessimism, cynicism, agnosticism in the present age, but she realises that behind and above all there is an eternal law of love, harmony, sweetness and light making for a divine life on earth. Possibilities of such a life are here. The Mother's prayer dated January 11, 1914 is a luminous explanation of the new gospel of terrestrial transformation.

She says: "Every moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us, every moment the universe is created anew in its entirety and in every one of its parts. And if we had a truly living faith, if we had the absolute certitude of Thy omnipotence and Thy sole reality, Thy manifestation could at each moment become so evident that the whole universe would be transformed by it. But we are so enslaved to everything that is around us and has gone before us, we are so influenced by the whole totality of manifested things, and our faith is so weak that we are yet unable to serve as intermediaries for the great miracle of transfiguration.... But, Lord, I know that it will come one day. I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who come to us; Thou wilt transform them so radically that, liberated completely from the bonds of the past, they will begin to live in Thee an entirely new life, a life made solely of Thee, with Thee as its sovereign Lord. And in this way all anxieties will be transformed into serenity, all anguish into peace, all doubts into certainties, all ugliness into harmony, all egoism into self-giving, all darkness into light and all suffering into immutable happiness."

She gives a key to the basis of such a vision in her prayer dated May 27, 1914. She says: "In each one of the domains of the being, the consciousness must be awakened to the perfect existence, knowledge and bliss. These three worlds or modes of the Divine are found in the physical reality as well as in the states of force and light and those of impersonality and infinitudes, of eternity. When one enters with full consciousness into the higher states, to live this existence, light and bliss is easy, almost inevitable. But what is very important, as well as very difficult, is to awaken the being to this triple divine consciousness in the most material worlds. This is the first point. Then one must succeed in finding the

centre of all the divine worlds (probably in the intermediate world), whence one can unite the consciousness of these divine worlds, synthetise them, and act simultaneously and with full awareness in all domains.”

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

GOLCONDE: A LOOK BEHIND

6. THE BUILDERS (2)

[Mrityunjoy's account of his memories of Agnes and François Sammer continues:]

MRITYUNJOY: An amusing incident comes to my mind while jotting down these old memories. The day of Agnes' arrival in 1939, I was invited by Madame Raymond to accompany them for sea-bathing the following morning. Sammer would also be with us and would introduce his wife. Nakashima, Raymond himself and his little son Claude would also come. I did not know what to say—I had a lot of work to do, and I did not know whether the Mother would approve. Besides, I had never been sea-bathing with ladies! But Pavitra encouraged me very warmly. “Why not?” he said. “It will be a good experience.” So I told the Mother, and she approved

The first thing that struck me was that they planned to go bathing after breakfast, whereas we usually bathe before eating. Anyway, Pavitra explained that they often go after eating. He gave me the costume he used for bathing when he was in Japan. So the next morning, which fortunately was a Sunday, Mme Raymond and her son, Nakashima, Shanti (the only young boy in the Ashram in those days) and I started for our outing. (Raymond did not come, he changed his mind at the last moment.) We went first to the house (now Good Guesthouse) of Suvrata (Madame Yvonne Gaebelé), where we picked up Sammer and his wife, to whom Shanti and I were introduced. Then the seven of us turned towards the sea. Leaving Parc au Charbon (which did not yet belong to the Ashram) far behind, we walked along the beach for almost a mile, but nobody spoke of going down to the sea. It surprised me, but more surprising and frightening was my thought about where all these people would change into their bathing costumes! There was nowhere to go, no trees or curtains one could go behind and change. So what was the idea? It flashed into my mind that Pavitra once told me that sometimes in Japan when people go to the sea to bathe, they just leave their clothes on the beach and enter the water quite naked; father, mother, brother, sister or anybody, go down to the sea nude and afterwards come back and get dressed on the beach. But that was a national practice—there was nothing objectionable in it! Alas, were we going to experience a repetition? And with these two ladies, one of whom we had met for the first time just that very day? What a trial, my Lord! If Pavitra had hinted at any such thing, I would surely never have come. I whispered my apprehensions to Shanti—he too began to feel uneasy. But now we could not turn back. So we left the matter to the Mother, as there was no other alternative

Happily, we soon found a huge country boat on the shore. Without any announcement, ladies and gentlemen divided, went to opposite sides of the boat,

and emerged in full bathing costumes. I found that Mme. Raymond had a modest costume, similar to our playground banian stitched to the underwear, whereas Agnes' costume was ultra-modern, only two thin pieces of cloth, one above and one below.

My prejudices against such physical exposure was bothering me. Then, after jumping in the sea, which was not very rough, the group began to play with a ball, something like water-polo. I too joined in and enjoyed it. Last began a game of catch and throw—not of the ball, but of one another! In this game those stronger physically—Nakashima and Sammer—naturally took the lead. Shanti and I did not venture to lift the ladies and throw them in the water. But this game was the most delightful of all, and each time that Nakashima caught Agnes and threw her into the sea in full view of her husband it was enjoyed by all, because he could throw very artistically. All through, the atmosphere was one of an innocent game and enjoyment, without the least vibration of shrinking or guilty conscience. On the way back, I began to wonder at myself; the same I, two hours ago, had been troubled by imagining something so gross and vital, but now I felt quite changed. I saw that it is only our sense of what is gross and our age-old prejudices that spoil everything.

One picture of Sammer remains unforgettable to me, it is his first approach to the Mother in the open pranam hall, just in front of Amrita's room. Since November 1931, the Mother had been sitting there each morning to receive pranam from the sadhaks and to give them flowers and her blessings. Sammer had already been in the Ashram for some months by then. Suddenly that day he stepped inside the hall and knelt down in front of the Mother, seated in her chair. She looked at him with her smile that melts stones, and he looked back at her with the innocent curiosity of a child. His unexpected entrance and the sweet reception given him by the Mother changed the whole atmosphere for a moment. He bowed down towards her lap, she pressed his head gently and patted it for some moments; then he got up, received a flower from her hand and she bade him goodbye by a sign of her head. He went out, but not right outside: he stepped towards Nolini's room, to the hall where the big clock stands now. He avoided the people looking at him, but we could see he was wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. Evidently there was an overflow of emotion he could not control.

After that he used to go to the pranam, not every day, for the time of his work and of the Mother's coming down did not always allow it, but whenever he could. When I saw him coming from the Mother, it was always the same scene: the uncontrollable overflow he was trying to stop by covering his eyes with a handkerchief. Yet he was an atheist when he came.

Sammer was a quick-tempered man. I often had hot exchanges with him at work on the site. But after an hour or so, he calmed down and was as friendly as ever. Even if I did not feel like behaving in a cordial way and kept a serious look, he would wash it away with an affectionate pat on the shoulder, saying, "To

remember such petty things!” In him I saw an example of one who had, without doing yoga, the attitude which the Mother wanted us to get by doing yoga.

Sammer could not stand our ignorant coolies; he did not understand their language and ways. One such memorable scene of tragi-comedy between a coolie and him comes to mind. Sammer saw a labourer approaching him from a distance; he did not want to deal with the coolie, so he shouted, “*Va-t’en!*” which in French means, “Go away!” but the coolie kept coming. The closer the man came, the more annoyed Sammer grew, and he kept on shouting “*Va-t’en!*”. Unfortunately in Tamil “*Va*” means “Come”—just the opposite of “Go”. Terrified, the man crept towards Sammer, who was on the point of losing his balance. Chandulal, our engineer, was with Sammer and he understood the joke; keeping his gravity before the worker, he patted his neck and told him to go. The man went away bewildered. Then Chandulal burst out laughing and explained the misunderstanding to Sammer.

Apart from the Golconde construction, Sammer had a hand in some other work inside the Ashram. It is he who designed the Japanese-style concrete pillar-supports for the Service tree in the Ashram courtyard. The Mother liked them very much. But in those days there was no question of having a Samadhī at that spot. The Mother had a young Service tree planted there in 1931, long before the architects came, and she had carefully protected it against injuries through the years, as a mother protects her growing child. Sammer also made cupboards and almirahs for the Mother—those in the corridor in front of Pavitra’s rooms and inside her own main room, which is now simply a passageway on the first floor—as well as the furniture for Golconde itself.

He was always a friend to all who met him; naturally, as he was a technical man and knew only French, his circle of contacts was limited. But for work connected with the building of Golconde, whenever I or any of my friends needed his help in understanding the blueprints or complicated drawings, he was always at our disposal. I was a layman from the standpoint of construction work; but he and the other engineers and architects instructed and guided us so well that after one or two years we could understand as well as any supervisor or technical advisor, and we conducted the work with the workmen very confidently.

It is pleasant to remember Sammer. He was to us never a foreigner, a Czechoslovakian, but a friend and a brother, an eternal child of the Mother.”¹

(To be continued)

SHRADDHAVAN

REFERENCE

¹ *A Look Behind*, by Mrityunjoy Mukherjee unpublished ms in Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library

THE GRAND OLD MAN OF ARCHAEOLOGY

DR. Hasmukh D. Sankalia, leading archaeologist and former director of Deccan College, Pune, died at the age of 80 on January 27, 1989.

The number of excavations that Sankalia conducted is staggering and bears witness not only to his drive but also to his comprehensive understanding of the problems of India's archaeology. In the early '40s it was Langhnaj in north Gujarat to study the middle Stone Age cultures, then in 1945-46 he went to Brahmapuri near Kolhapur, an old city that had carried on trade with the Romans in the early centuries of the Christian era; then it was Nasik and Jorwe in 1950-51 when they discovered remains dating back to around the middle of the second millennium before Christ.

During 1954-56 Sankalia and his colleagues conducted excavations of great significance at the site of Navasa, a place hallowed with associations with the poet saint Jnanasvara. They laid bare not only the medieval occupational strata of the 13th-14th century when Jnanasvara's cult flourished, but also stretched the antiquity of man right back to about 150,000 years.

The Navasa excavations are Sankalia's lasting contributions to Indian pre-historic archaeology. Sankalia's work at Mahesvar and Navdatoli on the Narmada in 1957-59 were equally rewarding, and their conclusions enduring. At Navdatoli, for the first time he laid bare the structure of an entire village settlement of the copper-stone period that was about 3,500 years old. He discovered contacts that the people of this area had with West Asia, especially Iran, in the form of distinctive ceramic forms such as that of the goblet, and figurines of a mother goddess.

In 1961 Sankalia excavated the protohistoric site of Ahar near Udaipur in Rajasthan. It had flourished in this area which was shut off from the outside world by the Aravalli mountains about 4,000 years ago. From 1968 onwards Sankalia and later Prof. Dhavalikar and his colleagues excavated the important Chalcolithic site of Inamgaon in Maharashtra and laid bare a unique settlement that had been occupied only by a community that used copper-stone, and which therefore afforded undisturbed remnants of houses and other aspects of material culture dating back 2,800 to 3,500 years.

He was the recipient of many honours in his lifetime.

But what distinguished Sankalia was his simple nature and the ability to adapt himself to any circumstance. Slightly built, he could convert his weaknesses to his own advantage. A sufferer of insomnia, he would wake up a little after 2 a.m., adding thereby at least four hours of working time to his life.

In his report on the Nasik excavation he expressed his gratitude to the authorities who made the excavators' stay on the burial ground 'comfortable'. The dry humour in the statement almost escapes the reader.

(From an article by Dr Kirit L. Mankodi in The Indian Post, 8.2.1989)

HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

THIS IS my simple, naive and unreserved narration of my life regarding how the spiritual flame grew within my inner being and how I was caught by the Sweet and Mighty Mother in Her spiritual net.

Born in a well-to-do tradition-ridden orthodox family on 28th October, 1923, I was a person without any outstanding talents but full of zeal to know, rise and grow in the worldly fields, *i.e.*, to have more and more education and earn degrees and subsequently enter in a particular profession to earn . . . to earn not for livelihood but to become economically free so that I might not be subjected to the prevalent norms of society which my parents and the elders wanted to impose on me, particularly because I was born a girl.

I badly wanted to stand against the social injustice meted out to women, interfering with the growth of their personality and preventing them from becoming valuable human beings. The root cause of this subjugation, I felt, was the economic dependence on the elders and gradually I realised that if I wanted to grow I must be economically independent.

At the age of 15 although there was vehement opposition by my father, I got myself admitted, through the help and persuasion of my mother, in class V in a convent school, Jodhpur, Rajasthan. During my school education I successfully topped the merit list and got double promotion which helped me to make up for the years I had wasted staying at home.

I was very much influenced by the nun sisters of the convent, so much so that I had it in mind to convert into a Christian and become a nun so that I might avoid any proposals of marriage. Yes, marriage which I considered in those days a social transaction of the parents for packing off their daughters and relieving themselves of their social burden, . . . sooner the better without giving any chance to the daughters to grow and develop. I was vehemently opposed to this so-called marriage institution which meant lucrative gains for the boy's party.

The only way of coming out of the social rut was to make oneself free economically. Oh, how I wanted to be free. . . How I used to remain absorbed and thrilled with those famous lines of Rousseau: "Man was born free but everywhere he is in chains". The words used to thrill my heart. Till then, I had read nothing about Sri Aurobindo or the Mother.... The name of the former I knew as applying to a Maharshi but about the latter I knew nothing; I had not even heard of Her.

Once I happened to request a school convent sister, whom I almost adored, to give me a chance to attend the Christmas midnight mass so that I might have some glimpses of their religious customs. As she readily agreed, I got a chance to visit the church at midnight. The heavenly tune of the Christmas carol and the sweet musical sounds of the piano in the vast silence of the midnight charged the whole atmosphere of the church with spiritual bliss and solemnity. The musical

waves and particularly the picture of Jesus with white shepherds and that of the bleeding heart with the cross surrounded by the aura of the flame of spirituality had an overwhelming impact on my whole being, touching the innermost core of my heart and filling me with a sort of inexpressible joy which aroused a quivering stir creating vibrations within me for search of something beyond my physical life... a life which was particularly subjected to conservative social norms of dos and don'ts. That time it was the year of my passing my matriculation examination (1942)

The concrete question—what is the purpose of human life and what should be the intrinsic value of the human being?—remained constantly vibrant within me. The thirst for getting a proper response to these questions from somewhere remained unquenched for quite a long time of my later life. But the search continued like running after a mirage in a sandy desert without reaching any oasis for quenching my thirst.

After matriculation, a few years rolled away without any higher education. As the so-called social trap of marriage started yawning I had to fight for getting my higher education. I wanted badly to grow into a valuable human being for which I knew economic independence was a 'must', particularly when I never wanted to tread in the ordinary average social routine path of a woman.

As my agitation for getting higher education continued persistently and as in Jodhpur state there was no girls' college in those days, I was sent to Calcutta for my further studies. During my college days in Calcutta the quest for getting the reply to those haunting questions continued without success.

Meantime, the intense need for breathing fresh air, free from strict social traditional norms, also started agitating vigorously. The songs of Rabindranath Tagore.

“সকোচেব বিহ্নলতা নিজেবে অপমান
সকটেব কল্পনাতে হয়ো না শ্ৰিয়মাণ...”

“আঙনের পবশমণি ছোঁয়াও প্ৰাণে...”

and the oft-quoted words from Shakespeare “. . . Life's a walking shadow, ... a tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”—all these had a tremendous impact on my search for the answer to my inner query. Even during my college life, I read nothing about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. But a little later I read a short biography of Sri Aurobindo and an account of his spiritual experience in Alipore Jail and of his settling in Pondicherry and His Ashram. I developed a vague attraction for visiting that place as I came to know that it was a centre of education and the so-called Ashram had been formed by some high spiritual learned souls. I passed my post-graduation in 1948 from Calcutta University.

Life kept drifting me through various events and finally I got a job satisfying

the long-cherished aim, *i.e.*, to have economic independence. In 1958 I got service as a lecturer in a private college, thereafter in a research wing in the Directorate of Economic and Industrial Surveys. After serving one and a half years on a non-gazetted post, I got promotion to a gazetted one and was sent to Udaipur for three years. There an elderly lady took me one day for a visit to the cremation ground, which is considered a holy place, in order to have some spiritual bliss. It was evening, the sun was about to set spreading its crimson rays all over the sky. The place was strewn with some broken earthen pots and heaps of ashes and also half-burnt studs of wood found scattered here and there. The bare naked atmosphere, its calm vastness, silence and solitude touched me deeply within, and awakened a feeling as though revealing something inexpressible. The inner query intensified more and more. It reminded me of the lines of Shakespeare again: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow . . . to the last syllable of recorded time. "

Is this the end of mortal life? What is the purpose of life? The query kept haunting me. Subsequently, whatever I did, whatever I heard and whatever I saw during the routine course of life, I found no answer. I kept myself wide open to everything with the convincing hope that I would get the reply.

(To be continued)

Compiled by K

YOGA—POETRY—LIFE

SIX PERSONAL LETTERS

THE therapies you are following strike me as effective. The doctor has full faith in them and you must do the same. But not only is perseverance required patience too is to be practised. For, while perseverance makes for the active dedicated drive of the mind towards the end in view, patience stands for a certain quietude in the being, rendering it receptive in its depths and helping to set right the jangle of the nerves.

Do not look upon the disease as exclusively your enemy. It has come for a purpose—and that purpose you have yourself intuited: “I must confess that by this disease my Sadhana has got such an intensity as I would never have reached without it.” This does not mean that you should ask to be more and more ill in order to feel the Mother’s Force increasingly. It only means that She stands behind everything and sometimes makes use of abnormal circumstances to find short cuts to us.

Last night, during my sleep, I was for hours in the Mother’s presence and the atmosphere of Her beauty and serenity and infinite graciousness is all around me still. So your letter reached me at a time when, if ever I can be Her instrument, I can best do it. The whole being rises in aspiration to Her for your welfare and, touched by it, a great warmth of love moves towards you. Keep ever active and vigilant your “surrender to Her Divine Will”.

Don’t let yourself be disturbed by the difficulties you have with your sleep. Invoke a sense of restfulness. To worry about not being able to sleep properly is worse than being sleepless. (1.8.87)

*

Your letter of the 20th August brought me great joy, for it connected me instantly with your inner being—a being deep, wide, clear, intense, from whose higher, mysterious, awaiting reaches came the sleep-vision you have written of. The powerful yet limpid blue sky was surely the overhead consciousness, leaning down in all its secret majesty to your soul—a glorious night connecting and communicating with your dream-depths, your psychic centre. The immediate overhead plane was what Sri Aurobindo has called the Higher Mind, the first link between our normal self and the levels of existence that are above it. The deep blue colour is indicative of this plane and the thin white-blue border is the sign of the planes beyond it pressing to break through. But what has somehow broken through, on however small a scale, is a glint from the highest—Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s supramental light—as shown by the golden crescent on one side of the sky and a golden star on the opposite side. There cannot

be a greater promise of a sweet and profound future. The crescent bears in its arms the gift of the Mother's healing bliss and the star symbolises intuitive knowledge, bringing to you as a counterpart from Sri Aurobindo the boon of spiritual insight, the truth-touch that removes all distortions, inner or outer. Surely with such heavenly hints of the divine presence watching over you there can be no doubt that you will come smiling through whatever ailment has been troubling you. Try to live as much as possible in the memory of this vision.

(4.9.1987)

*

As regards your balance-sheet of plus and minus points, the minus ones indicating what you have lost strike me as very promising, they are plus points in disguise, empty spaces waiting or calling for touches from beyond our humanity. You are on the ambiguous border-line of a new life without quite knowing it. When one is on the spiritual path, the falling away of old movements without new ones taking their place are not really losses. The succession of them is no mere piling of negatives. The result of the adding up of subtraction-symptoms may prove unconsciously to be like the music of Browning's Abt Vogler: out of two notes there may be made not a third but a star! When the minuses reach a peak point a sudden surprising break away from the ordinary life may occur. A small significant sign seems to be present in your falling into a common misuse of a word. You write: "my disinterest in routine work." What you feel is a certain absence of something that was habitual and you intend to express your non-interest. But the soul within has made your pen slip to show the underlying truth waiting to emerge. What is about to develop is a sustained disinterestedness, a continuous exceeding of the personal element in the work, a preparation for a consecration of it to the Divine. You are on the verge of getting out of the small self which was there whether you enjoyed doing your job or felt it to be bothersome. To pass into "disinterest" across a seeming no-man's-land will be a great step forward, a move into a divine distance between yourself as you were and the true You.

(27.3.1986)

*

I have read of the recent chapters of your "sad" story. I say "sad" from the external point of view, but from the viewpoint of the soul there is nothing sad or glad: everything can be an occasion for a step forward on its journey towards the Divine. Sri Aurobindo has written: "The psychic being in us takes its account even of the most perverse or contrary as well as of its more benign experiences and grows by the rejection of them or acceptance, it extracts a divine meaning and use from our most poignant sufferings, difficulties, misfortunes." To realise this alchemy of the soul we have to be in contact with the alchemist and then the

outer self in us will be pervaded more and more by the psychic consciousness which is like an unflickering flame burning ever upward in a windless place, a flame which can bring to the common human heart of us a warmth of self-existent happiness, a glow of satisfying insight into the ever-wise Love that is Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's.

I am not writing this from book-learning I never preach anything that I have not personally known through a life of more falls and physical setbacks than most people undergo—a life, however, which at the same time has felt more than many people the intimate uplifting hold of the Mother's sweetness and Sri Aurobindo's compassion Being what we are, we cannot escape the pitfalls of a world of ignorance and imperfection, but we have the opportunity to keep our beings aware of the Divine Presence which can heal all wounds and make us go forward in spite of all our faults. To have been a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from my twenty-third year has not prevented me from stumbling and tumbling but it has prevented me from grumbling and has brought me a peaceful understanding of the Divine's intricate working in the world and a certain closeness to the perpetual smile that is upon the Divine's all-seeing face and a calm conviction that whatever the look of things

A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.

(23.5.1986)

*

As your letter introduces an important literary subject I feel inclined to reply at once and at some length.

The subject is a little complicated. First of all, there is the sense of a piece of writing being one's very own. Here one does not consider the quality of the piece. Here the individuality of the writer is the main concern. But surely the writing has to be as good as possible? Then the sense of authenticity comes in. There are two shades in this matter. To begin with: what one had in mind, what one wanted to mean makes the thing authentic but one can convey a certain meaning in either a crude or a refined way. Now the sense of form enters the scene. The writer has to be some kind of artist—at least a good word-combiner—and aim at clarity and order. Clarity and order are the presiding deities of prose. But there are surface thoughts and there are depth thoughts. The latter have an element of subtlety and a greater art is required to give them authentic expression. The more subtle they are the more insight one must have into what exactly is trying to get expressed. The writer has to question himself and develop an intuitive feeling. This is particularly necessary when one writes poetry—even free verse; for all poetry has delicate shades, profound gleams, wider bearings than the actual subject's significance. One has to get at them in order to give one's piece its full and final shape. And, of course, one has to be sensitive to the

sound-values of words as well as to the relative positions of the words. Now, the question is how far the writer is accustomed to do the probing I speak of—the requisite inward-looking habit.

Not all poets develop it. Unless it is developed, one gets involved only in the immediate thoughts one has had while writing. What I have tried to do with your father's poem *God* is to get at the inspiration behind it and the various implications it must have had. Take the first line:

Every flower, every tear, every smile....

What is "flower" doing here? The transition to the next items is sudden and arbitrary. "Tear" and "smile" are antithetical and suggest that in even opposites God is present since He is everywhere in the world, whether openly or secretly. Something linked to "flower" is missing—and without it the item is unsupported in this first line. It stands as a pretty feature without poetic logic. Poetry should always have both magic and logic, not separately but playing into each other or closely linked. Here, to balance a God-phenomenon in Nature to the God-phenomenon in human life, I proposed "Every flower, every thorn" to go with "Every smile, every tear" An alternative version could be:

Every flower, every dewdrop,
Every smile, every tear ..

Instead of a balance of antithesis, a balance of analogies is introduced. Both the movements can be read in the original inspiration. We may say that now the magic and logic are fused, while in the other version they stood close and jointly contributed to the poem's communication. My intention in making what seem like corrections is really to get into touch with your father's inspiration-source and catch its true secret urge.

I am not a schoolmaster. From years of learning from Sri Aurobindo what the heart and art of poetry are, I try to help my brothers-in-verse. If my attempt is not seen in the light in which I would request them to see it, I am not disappointed nor am I annoyed. It is natural, as you say, that "they express their ideas in the words they think are most appropriate" and so "in such cases it becomes very difficult to make them agree to any change in their creation". Of course, to alter things *in toto* or in great measure is hardly to help a writer: what one should endeavour to do is just to suggest alterations which would make the writer's own theme and expression reach complete blossoming so that the writer does not feel replaced but taken further along his own line and fulfilled in his true self.

I have referred to Sri Aurobindo as my teacher in poetry. I may give you an example of his fine perception—an example apropos of your reference to a

writer's own sense of appropriate wording. Sometimes a writer trying to become more appropriate in his words can come quite a cropper Here's a sonnet I wrote long ago—27.8.1936:

PURNA

Men call thee bare because they fear thy light,
 The dazzle of far chastity that brings
 A joy but with the whole heart void of things
 Dear to brief clay, yet grows thy simple white
 The virgin mother of each passionate tone,
 Save for the mind that will not follow fast
 The visionary winging of thy Vast
 Above the narrow blisses earth has known

He whose desire from mortal love is freed
 Catches the treasure veiled in thy pure speed
 And, from the bare white, views a luxury burst:
 Truth-pulsing gold to which the sun were black,
 A griefless carmine that all roses lack,
 One ample azure brimming every thirst!

Sri Aurobindo commented. "A very fine sonnet in all respects." But the next day I got it into my head to do what Shakespeare considered "wasteful and ridiculous excess"—namely, "to gild refined gold, to paint the lily,.. or add another hue to the rainbow." I wrote: "I am sorry to have sent that rather raw version of my sonnet. Here is a more coherent one " The latter suggested lines 4-10 to run:

.yet grows thy virgin white
 The mystic mother of each passionate tone,
 Save for the mind that will not dare to cast
 All life within thy visionary Vast
 Above the narrow blisses earth has known.

Whoso from mortal love has sought release
 Attains the treasure locked in thy pure peace...

Sri Aurobindo passed over the two concluding lines' variation but exploded in the margin of the first four "Man alive! The virgin mother was magnificent, and you kick her out! And the two last lines in their original form were the finest in the poem and you reduce them to something good but not above the ordinary!! Beware of the meddling correcting mind."

The final sentence's warning is against the merely critical intelligence's interference with inspiration, trying to get things mentally precise instead of letting an intuitive inevitability have its way. Another example of its interference I remember. Something that had come out perfect in a poem called "Singers of the Spirit" I attempted to modify under a false idea of communicative poetic power. Thus I changed

Our tones of fathomless joy instil
A taste of the Ineffable

to

With tones of fathomless joy we instil
A taste of the Ineffable,

and the deeply moving "psychic cry" went out of the opening line and along with it suggestive spontaneity too, giving place to a thought-out statement with an obvious turn.

Of course, when from one's profundities one can raise the level of a line to a finer plane the poet has the right to interfere with his own production. Now one moment of inspiration is substituted by another which is greater. Thus Sri Aurobindo transformed an early *Savitri*-line

Concealed because too brilliant for our sight

to one graver, more directly visual in a mystic sense:

Veiled by the Ray no mortal eye can bear.

(18.3 1986)

*

It is too much of an honour to me that I should be requested to give my views on the subject you have chosen for your dissertation: "Mind Power in Military Application." I can only offer a few suggestions. I suppose the immediate importance of this power lies in gauging enemy plans and preparing to meet them and in being able to rise to the challenge of any sudden development on the battlefield. But to have the ability to do such things the mind has to be both keen and deep. Keeness can be acquired by training it on various problems, trying to get at the centre of each by tackling its greatest difficulty first. Depth comes from the ability to hold one's mental faculties in voluntary silence, not exercising them but turning them inward, as it were, so that one tends to exceed the individual frame in which the intelligence is set and lay oneself open to what may be called the secret "universal mind". Our mind is inclined to be active all the time:

mastery of it consists partly in one's power to control this activity and turn the consciousness to a meditative posture in which it can be receptive to what is beyond it—

Lifted by intimations from the heights
And in the pauses of the building brain
Touched by the thoughts that skim the fathomless surge
Of Nature and wing back to hidden shores.

People generally do not believe that there is a greater mind than ours and that by coming into contact with it in one way or another we can have intuitions which go to the heart of a situation. Apart from the practice of the presence of such a wider inward potency, it would be a good thing always to draw back for a moment into a short silence before launching out on any scheme of action. All skill of the mind depends on how much it has been enriched not only by its employment but also by its being put at the service of a profound peace in the midst of life's vicissitudes. I believe that master-strategists and commanders like Napoleon could somehow tap resources above their own natural movements. Napoleon's victories were like little miracles as if he were an instrument of some superforce. Even against heavy odds he could make inspired moves to nullify them. And behind them all were his own fearless spirit and his faith in what he called his "star." His series of pitched battles ending in magnificent victories—Austerlitz, Ulm, Marengo, etc.—is known to all military students. But few remember what I consider his greatest triumph. It was won without a shot being fired.

You may know of his escape from Elba where he had been exiled after the contretemps he suffered at Leipzig where a number of nations combined to attack his depleted army returning from Russia. After his escape he marched with a handful of men towards France. The Bourbons had been restored to the French throne and the whole army was at the service of the new regime. A substantial contingent was sent to check Napoleon before he could approach Paris. It came in sight of his small group and made him out at the head of it. The soldiers were ordered to train their rifles on him and frighten him out of his supposedly hair-brained ambition to effect a coup. Napoleon, instead of being stopped, broke away from his group and kept striding towards the long line of rifle-ready troops against him. The soldiers watched the well-known figure in the three-cornered hat and long grey coat open in front along the whole body-length as if exposing it to their deadly aim. When he came within earshot of his old army he shouted: "Where is the Frenchman who will shoot his emperor?" That single cry was enough to turn the tables. The entire contingent rose as one man and throwing away its rifles ran frenziedly towards Napoleon, exclaiming "Vive l'empereur!" The soldiers knelt down at his feet, catching his hands and kissing

them. The tremendous personality and genius of the man who had started as “the Little Corporal” and become conqueror of all Western Europe achieved now his mightiest conquest. At the head of the very troops that had been sent to stop and capture him he marched on Paris.

The sequel is common knowledge. After a hundred days there was the confrontation at Waterloo—the British under Wellington and the Prussians under Blucher facing the returned terror of Europe. Napoleon lost the battle and there was rejoicing in England as if there had been a severe beating given to him. But what did Wellington himself have to say? His words are: “It was a damned near thing.” Actually, up to the end nobody could have said what the issue would be.

I am tempted to go into the details of the battle to show that no fault of Napoleon’s was responsible for his defeat. Unexpected circumstances undermined his masterly plan. Unforeseen accidents of Nature’s “caprices” or of human folly can come in the way even of geniuses. But perhaps there was a decision by the Gods to check Napoleon who had so far been their instrument of progress in his defence of the France of the Revolution against the surrounding feudal remnants of the past. He seems to have overdone the ‘mission’ he had been given and the time was ripe for a new turn of European affairs. If we do not take these factors into account, what we see in his life is a certain drawing upon invisible reserves of mind by a constant poise and an opening to “inspiration”.

I don’t know any specific books to recommend. One important study would be of how the minds of the great soldiers of history—from Alexander to MacArthur—worked. But possibly the main help would come from the sharpening and “poising” of your own mental faculty.

Have I been of any help to you by all the above remarks? Maybe some little urge has been communicated towards realising that, as Wordsworth says, “we are greater than we know” and that much can be done by getting into relation with the Unknown within and beyond us. We must let it raise to a climax of efficiency whatever gifts we ourselves possess of mentally coping with the challenge of events or, if we so like to phrase it, with the tests of the Unknown outside us.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of May 1989)

The Mother's Message

This is the
interesting story of
how a being discovered
the Divine Life



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No. 30

AUGUST was coming to an end Vasudha and two girls started learning to make artificial flowers from silk and other fabrics at my place

I made for the Mother a spray which she admired and kept in her dressing room.

There was no precise work. Everything seemed unsettled and precarious. The joy of life was often eclipsed by depression and despondency I tried to move away from the dark aura of recurrent distress and unhappiness. The hostile forces were worming up their way to possess my consciousness. I felt a sharp pang at the thought of how to reach my goal. My inner struggle began

*

Unfailingly the Mother sent me white roses and “Prasad”. I wanted very much to unburden my heart to her. A card dated 23-8-60 came from the Mother, depicting the picture-stamps of Mount Fuji and the Imperial Palace, Tokyo, and her words were:

“Huta, my dear little child,
On the 12th September, I shall give you some time in the morning at 10 o'clock.
With my love and blessings ”

The clock pinged ten delicate notes as I walked into the Meditation Hall upstairs. There the Mother was sitting on her high-backed carved chair. She received me with flowers and a smile.

I went down on my knees before her. She looked into my eyes deeply, searchingly.

Countless questions welled up in me and passed unvoiced. Her eyes never broke contact with mine. Then slowly she closed them and slid into a trance for quite some time.

Finally she spoke—her words seemed to quiver in the air like sudden music: “Child, do painting and the things you have learnt in London. Continue your French lessons at the Alliance Française.”

The Mother added with appreciation:

“When you were in London I was watching all your movements from here. (*Pointing at the centre of subtle vision between the eye-brows*) In whatever situation you were, whatever difficulties you went through, your aspiration for the Divine was straight like a sword. (*gesture*) I congratulate you.

“When you came from London and met me, I was really amazed to see the flame of the aspiration grown more luminous, very high and steady.

“I saw the vision of your aspiration in 1957 after our meditation in my room at the Playground.

“But just now I saw the flame—erect—rising high up and then it

merged into the golden Light above. As the huge sea-waves splash against rocks, their glittering spray sprinkle all over, so this flame which merged into the Infinity of golden Light, sent sprays of sparks flying on all sides and when they came down they showered on the world and enveloped it with Light.

“Child, this was the beauty of your soul. This beauty is now established firmly in you and will never perish

“Paint the vision I have seen this morning.”

The Mother paid me lavish compliments. I sat and stared with rapt attention. I said: “Mother, now I am getting old—there is so much to do in this life but time is running out. I am nowhere near my goal.”

Hot tears scalded my eyes. She held my hands and said with solicitude:

“You are very young. Do you know that Yogis live for 125 years?”

“Oh, but, Mother, I am not a Yogi and it is doubtful whether I shall ever be one.”

Tears refilled my eyes.

She leaned down and regarded me more closely—her blue-grey eyes growing warm with an exquisite expression of compassion I had never witnessed before.

Our love had stood the test of time.

*

My parents and all the family members were now in Pondicherry, because the Mother was to inaugurate The New Horizon Sugar Mills Ltd. at Sacur about twelve miles from the town on 15 September 1960.

She came in the afternoon and pressed the button—the siren lifted its banshee voice. She saw the whole process of sugar-making.

The huge rollers squeezed out the sugar-cane juice which was then pumped into large tanks to be heated, clarified with certain chemicals and then allowed to settle and dry. Finally the sugar was packed in big bags.

The smell of heavy sweet molasses diffused everywhere.

There was a shower of rain which indicated the Divine's Grace.

Afterwards the Mother went into the office and sat on the chair specially made for her.

My father offered the Mother Rs. 51,000/-

All my family was photographed with her except me. One last snap was to be taken. I managed to come closer so that I too might come into the picture. Meanwhile Mr. Surendra Mohan Ghosh (M.P.) entered the room. I rose from

my place at the sign of command in the Mother's eyes. I was disappointed—I had been left out.

The next morning I went to the Mother. She was with Vasudha in the small passage leading to Sri Aurobindo's room. She looked at me and started telling Vasudha something in French which I failed to comprehend. Her eyes twinkled for one instant as they met mine. She then disclosed:

“Yesterday I saw you among your family members. You are quite different from them. You don't belong to them—you have come from another sphere” (*gesture lifting her index finger up*).

Later Vasudha told me that the Mother had said the same thing to her in French.

I laughed at my stupidity and thought: “I should not have been disturbed when I had not been photographed.”

*

Sweetmeat was prepared in the Ashram dining room from the sugar given by my people to mark the occasion.

On 17 September Mr. Manubhai Shah, the then Minister of Commerce and Industries, came from Delhi to attend the grand function given in his honour at The New Horizon Sugar Mills Ltd.

The atmosphere was totally different from the earlier one—more material than spiritual.

*

On 19 September my parents and other family members left for their various destinations. I felt desolate and full of despair despite the Mother's words regarding my relationship with them. But I observed that she worked to break the attachment completely. Yet unfortunately it took me a pretty long time to be absolutely detached.

*

In spite of the unbearable heat I went to Vasudha's Embroidery Department at 2 p.m. to make on a special frame the Mother's golden-silk dress with the golden beads I had brought from London. There was also a plan in my mind to make a golden rose which would be stitched on the dress, and a small bead-bag the Mother might carry when she went for her outing in a car.

Apart from this work I attended in the morning for a short time the English

literature and poetry class taken by Norman Dowsett

The most touching and amusing thing he told us in the class was: “*Savitri* is so absorbing that one day during the recess I started reading it and forgot all about the classes I was supposed to take till the school closed.”

*

The inner churning was constant After the darkest night of the past, there came the dawn of the future. At last I met my beloved *Savitri*! I was strangely and strongly inspired to express *Savitri* through paintings I disclosed the matter to the Mother on 26 September when she met me at 4 p.m. She held my hands, a happy smile touched her mouth at my words. She responded:

“You know, my child, I had a great wish to express through paintings the visions I had seen in 1906, but I had no time.

Here in the Ashram I encouraged several people, but without avail. Now you will fulfil my wish.”

All the hints direct and indirect about the spiritual paintings she had been giving me since 1956 came rushing back to me.

After a deep contemplation she resumed:

“I will help you constantly I will take you to higher worlds and show you the Truth. You must remember the Truth and express it through painting ”

I recalled the most revealing letters she had written to me about the higher worlds and about spiritual and occult painting They proved to be a wonderful promise.

Now my inner mind saw clearly that not only myself but the whole of humanity would be benefited by this project

My life suddenly assumed a new purpose—a new meaning.

The following morning the Mother sent through Dyuman a Souvenir Book, *The Mother*. She had placed a lovely marker on page 49 and drawn attention to these lines from Sri Aurobindo with a red pencil:

“What I am trying to do everywhere in the poem is to express exactly something seen, something felt or experienced.... *Savitri* is the record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind and is often very far from what the general human mind sees and experiences ”

In the afternoon the Mother received me affectionately. Our eyes met—hers held the supreme promise. I smiled in acknowledgment.

I knew within me that she would not sway once she had made up her mind.

The Mother explained:

“First you must do a painting on a small board with various colours—different blues, pinks, yellows, greens and reds.

“I will certainly help you. I will put my Force into you so there will be a link between two consciousnesses. Go ahead.”

I said hesitatingly: “But, Mother, I am not very good at drawing, perspective and landscape. I have shown you the sketches I did in London. They are awful. How is it possible for me to express the Epic?” She shed light on the subject:

“You see, these things are not necessary, because the Epic is full of visions and they can be expressed by giving only an impression. The most important thing is that in painting you must bring vibrations, feelings, liveliness and consciousness.”

I said: “Mother, how can I paint until I read *Savitri* word by word? First I must understand the Epic intellectually.”

She lapsed into a trance for a few minutes. She opened her eyes and said in a thoughtful voice:

“I’ll see to it.”

*

On 28 September—Durga Puja Day—the Mother handed to people this message.

MOTHER DURGA! From age to age, in life after life, we come down into the human body, do thy work and return to the Home of Delight. Now too we are born, dedicated to thy work. *Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, come to our help.*

MOTHER DURGA! We are thy children, through thy grace, by thy influence may we become fit for the great work, for the great Ideal. Mother, destroy our smallness, our selfishness, our fear.

Sri Aurobindo

On the 30th once again she gave the following message to all of us:

MOTHER DURGA! Enter our bodies in thy Yogic strength. We shall become thy instruments, thy sword slaying all evil, thy lamp dispelling all ignorance. Fulfil this yearning of thy young children, O Mother. Be the master and drive thy instrument, wield thy sword and slay the evil, hold up the lamp and spread the light of knowledge. Make thyself manifest.

MOTHER DURGA! When we possess thee, we shall no longer cast thee away; we shall bind thee to us with the tie of love and devotion. Come, Mother, manifest thyself in our mind and life and body

Come, Revealer of the hero-path. We shall no longer cast thee away. May our entire life become a ceaseless worship of the Mother, all our acts a continuous service to the Mother, full of love, full of energy. This is our prayer, O Mother, descend upon earth, make thyself manifest in this land of India.

Sri Aurobindo

With these luminous lines came an end to the eventful September.

(To be continued)

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THE MEANING OF *THE COCKTAIL PARTY* BY T. S. ELIOT

THERE was a time when *The Cocktail Party* was hailed on all sides as a masterpiece. Irritated by the success of the play, a critic like John Peter felt it necessary to demonstrate the superiority of *Murder in the Cathedral* which, in his view, was lucid and free from the “arch mystifications” of the later play. To him, the meagreness of its verse was “evident”, and “the Noel-Cowardish slickness of a good deal of the dialogue even more disturbing”.¹ He considered Eliot’s defence of Reilly’s behaviour in the first scene of the play by referring to the Alcestis of Euripides odd and frivolous. One need not quarrel with a critic who prefers *Murder in the Cathedral* to *The Cocktail Party* but this first typical attack against the latter was followed by many revealing a gross misunderstanding or a deliberate distortion of its meaning.

Most critics of *The Cocktail Party* seem to feel that the play does scant justice to the virtues of the life of the common routine. Even Lionel Trilling complains that Eliot’s representation of the two ways of life, that of the common routine and that of the terrifying journey to beatitude, exemplifies how we are drawn to the violence of extremity.

This failure, in the great critic’s view, is typical of modern literature since Tolstoi. These writers can imagine the dull not-being of life and the intense not-being of death but not Being which can be a joy.² D. W. Harding finds it difficult to accept Edward and Lavinia as properly representing “the human condition”.³ Walter Stein arrives at the disturbing conclusion that *The Cocktail Party* is unwittingly a Manichean play inasmuch as “its vision is not that of a humane... Christianity, but approximates to a radical division of existence into spheres of Nature and Transcendence sharply separated from each other: where the transcendent is not merely approached by way of the disclosure of Nature’s essential imperfections, but finally embraced as a—literally—desperate alternative to the latter’s graceless essence”.⁴

William Lynch finds fault with Eliot’s sending one woman to “the monotony and dross of her human love” and another to a divine and contemplative vocation. He wishes that it had been the same woman who had taken up the two vocations in the one act and the one situation. In his opinion, Eliot’s breakdown of the matter into two situations and two salvations represents a failure and an evasion.⁵ After pointing out that some of these charges are too severe, Denis Donoghue comes to the conclusion that “the real defect of *The Cocktail Party*, a defect of drama and rhetoric, is that it presents the life of the common routine and the way of beatitude as totally discrete”⁶ The play is but a tragedy manqué to John Gassner because the potentially most dramatic character, Celia, has been lost to us in a design, while the main comedy-of-manners characters, Edward and Lavinia, have nothing to do but demonstrate their acceptance of their lot as second-class citizens of Eliot’s stratified cosmic society. This critic is

terribly annoyed because immediately after the Chamberlaynes listen to the report of Celia's death, Julia and Alex go jollily to a cocktail party at The Gunnings. Grover Smith observes that though both Celia and Peter are imaginative and rebellious, Celia is converted to patience, "a quality strangely akin to conservatism, and by sublimation of will, she is led to attain to a nobler calling than is possible even to imagination".⁷

The apparent implications of the play's argument do not seem to have pleased many but weak defences of Eliot's presentation of the two ways of life are not wanting. D. E. S. Maxwell, for instance, condemning the judgment that the play is an essay in morbid asceticism, contends that such a verdict overlooks a nice point of character, a purely dramatic problem. Substantiating his view, Maxwell traces the development of Celia's character and warns the audience against accepting only the humour of the comedy and passing over the rest in brute patience. His plea is that the audience should cooperate with the dramatist in order to arrive at the right interpretation.⁸

Very surprisingly Raymond Williams speaks of the success of *The Cocktail Party* and argues that Celia's choice of atonement and the path leading to isolation and a terrible death is an essential element of the play. Her experience and decision and Reilly's acceptance of the consequence, according to Williams, are shown with great lucidity and power. "And the business of criticism, the process of enjoyment of literature, involves such acceptance as the power of the play enjoins of the values on which it is based. To question the values in themselves is to leave literature behind, and to enter a no-man's land between literature and morality".⁹

M. C. Bradbrook and Northrop Frye do not take the question seriously. To the former, *The Cocktail Party* has a full completeness that makes it the most satisfying and mature of Eliot's plays, in which "the past is altered by the present, and a technique of retrospective illumination enables even the frivolities of the opening lines to be recalled quite naturally at the close".¹⁰ Calling Celia's martyrdom a hideous one, Frye gives an approving account of her life: "The sense of sin, which is equally personal and impersonal, is too oppressive for Celia to reconcile herself to the human condition like the Chamberlaynes, and she starts on a spiritual journey which takes her into an austere nursing order, thence to martyrdom by crucifixion in Africa".¹¹ As a myth-critic, Frye is naturally reminded of the Chapel Perilous by the sanatorium and of the journey of the Lady in *Comus* by the arduous path chosen by Celia.

The attacks on Eliot's portrayal of two levels of community living, the social and the spiritual, are based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of the play. For those who care for all the clues found in the play and in the earlier writings of Eliot the message is not difficult to get at. As R. P. Blackmur observes, "unwilling to accept as sufficient the commitments visible in his society, yet himself committed to that society, Eliot attempts to express its predicament in

terms of the christian tradition which ought to enlighten it". What Blackmur says of Eliot's poetry is true of his plays also: "What is important is that Eliot has been forced... to make present in his poetry not only christian dogma and christian emotion, but also the underlying permanent conditions, stresses, forces with which that dogma and that emotion are meant to cope".¹²

In *Little Gidding* it is said that old men ought to be explorers:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time. (LI 239-42)

Edward, who as a middle-aged man "begins to know what it is to feel old", is compared with a schoolboy:

You look like a little boy who's been sent for
To the headmaster's study, and is not quite sure
What he's been found out in. (I. iii. 81-83)

The struggle of Edward to get at reality and his advances in self-knowledge are clearly indicated Edward feels that he is alone in the hell-prison-cell of self.

Why could I not walk out of my prison?
What is Hell? Hell is oneself,
Hell is alone, the other figures in it
Merely projections. (I. iii 416-20)

He benefits by Celia's martyrdom Though at first tortured by a sense of guilt he learns to accept it as a happy occurrence. Enlightenment and understanding come slowly to him and he says with great humility

Oh, it isn't much
That I understand yet! But Sir Henry has been saying
I think, that every moment is a fresh beginning
And Julia, that life is only keeping on;
And somehow, the two ideas seem to fit together, (III. 535-39)

By virtue of his humility and willingness to learn, he gains spiritual stature and by the time we meet him at the end we realise that there has been a sea-change. And we are reminded of what is said at the end of "East Coker".

Old men ought to be explorers
Here and there does not matter

We must be still and still moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion
 Through the dark cold and the empty desolation
 The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
 Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning.

(LI 202-10)

At first Celia does not seem to be different from others. But her spiritual greatness slowly emerges. With her highly imaginative and poetic nature, she combines a craving for an ideal love. When she learns that her affair with Edward has been nothing but a make-believe, she understands that the man was only a projection of something she aspired to. Very soon she becomes free of worldly attachment and approaches a knowledge of the love of God. She is quick to detect what afflicts her:

I am not afraid of the death of the body,
 But this death is terrifying. The death of the spirit—
 Can you understand what I suffer? (II 170-72)

When she goes to Reilly for spiritual counsel she reveals utter humility and child-like innocence—and allows herself to be guided by her guardian. She is prepared to undergo the process by which the human is transhumanised and places herself completely under the guidance of Reilly as though he were her spiritual guru. Julia is able to place her:

Henry, you simply do not understand innocence.
 She will be afraid of nothing; she will not even know
 That there is anything there to be afraid of
 She is too humble. She will pass between the scolding hills,
 Through the valley of derision, like a child sent on an errand
 In eagerness and patience. Yet she must suffer (II. 771-776)

Endowed with these spiritual assets, she is set on the path of martyrdom and bound to prove worthy of the occasion. When the violent death, the crucifixion near an ant-hill comes, it does not come as a tragic end but as a triumph.

Like the message of the thunder to the three groups—the Asuras, the Devas and the human beings in *The Waste Land*, the advice that Reilly gives to all the three patients—Edward, Lavinia and Celia—is the same:

“Go in peace. And work out your salvation with diligence.”

But the married couple chooses one path—the path of reconciliation; the spiri-

tually inclined lady opts for the love of God and martyrdom Julia makes this clear when she says,

Every one makes a choice, of one kind or another,
And then must take the consequences. Celia chose
A way of which the consequence was Kinkanja.
Peter chose a way that leads him to Boltwell:
And he's got to go there. (III. 507-11)

This is underlined again when she humorously remarks.

And now the consequences of the Chamberlaynes' Choice
Is a Cocktail party. (III. 526-27)

When Lavinia says that she does not want to see the people who have come for the party, Reilly drives home the same point:

"It is your appointed burden." (III. 541)

At an earlier stage when he describes to Celia the two different ways, Celia asks the pointed question:

Which way is better?

Pat comes Reilly's unambiguous reply:

Neither way is better.
Both ways are necessary. It is also necessary
To make a choice between them. (II. 686-88)

And he further explains that "each way means loneliness—and communion".

Those who need further clarification and proof to conclude that the life of the common routine is not ridiculed should go to the relevant passage in the *Four Quartets*:

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant—

....

And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way
back.

....

And do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward.

O voyagers, O seamen,
 You who come to port, and you whose bodies
 Will suffer the trial and judgment of the sea
 Or whatever event, this is your real destination?
 So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
 On the field of battle.

Not fare well,
 But fare forward, voyagers.

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LOST TRIBE WITH A VEDIC PAST

A SMALL community inhabiting about 40 villages in the Bangan area of north-west Garhwal has preserved astounding features of Vedic traditions and old Sanskrit in their language for more than 3,000 years.

A peculiar aspect of these people is that some of the Sanskrit words, once spoken during Vedic times and which the community uses in their everyday language even today, are not documented and were generally believed to have become extinct many years ago.

More significantly, these people have also preserved traces of the Indo-European Kentum language, which was not known to have been spoken in this part of the world.

German linguistic scholar and Indologist, Dr Claus Peter Zoller, has discovered this community in the upper catchment areas of Tons river on the border between Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. It is definitely very significant from the point of view of history. Though Dr. Zoller is yet to provide a final explanation for his strange discovery—it is believed that this would reopen the historic controversy over the migration of Aryans into India.

Dr. Zoller, the representative of the South Asia Institute in India of the University of Heidelberg, says that the most intriguing thing is the discovery of the archaic Kentum, a branch of Indo-European language, which is being used by them. Though there is still insufficient information to say that these people are the direct descendants of the Indo-European tribes which had migrated to different parts of Europe, there is enough to indicate a possible intermixing between the Aryans and the Indo-Europeans during or before their respective migrations, he says.

Both the Sanskrit and Kentum layers which have survived among these people are embedded so deep in their culture that these could not have been taught to them at any later date, said Zoller who has been studying dialects in Garhwal on a German fellowship. According to him both the Kentum speaking people and the Aryans lived across the Caspian sea near the Caucasus mountain area in the Soviet Union. So far historians have believed that Aryans were the only people who had migrated to India. Now, in the light of this discovery, fresh doubts have arisen about this generally accepted belief. A possibility which does not seem too remote is that besides the Aryans, groups of Kentum speaking people had also migrated into India around the same time or later and there was perhaps intermingling between them. “Unfortunately, what happened when the Kentum speaking people met the Aryans—who dominated—and how and why they mixed with each other, cannot be reconstructed anymore,” says Zoller who is attempting to unravel more mysteries.

The linguistic information unearthed thus far indicates that the people of Bangan have their own stories about the migration to their present destination in

their traditional folklore. They believe that they had originally descended from heaven and this marked their progress from purity towards impurity. The Bangani people also hold that they are moving from the West towards the East in different stages which they term "thac"—meaning a holy clearing in the forest where they settle during a particular stage. And in this journey from heaven they are now into their fourth "thac" migrating through the Kabul valley via Kashmir into their present settlement in Garhwal.

However, quite unaware of their new-found historic significance, the Banganis continue to live a normal life. According to Dr. Zoller, because they look very much like the people in the neighbouring areas and also speak the western Pahari language, it is not apparent that these people have anything special about them. In fact, Dr. Zoller had lived among them for nearly one and a half years before noticing anything which might have given him a clue to his present discovery. "It was all by chance that I realised what they had in them. I was reading an article about an old language in west Pakistan which had several words which sounded similar to the ones used by the Banganis. It was only after some months that I realised that my hypothesis was wrong and the words spoken by Banganis were not so old but by then I had already started on an altogether different line which led me to this discovery," said Dr. Zoller with a mischievous smile.

Interestingly, besides hundreds of rare Sanskrit words many of which are not even documented in the Sanskrit language today, the Banganis have also preserved the traditional grammar and the Aryan customs. Many a participle, prefix, suffix and old types of compounds of Sanskrit grammar are used by them. For example, the original Sanskrit word *Vikhada* which has been used only once in the Rig Veda and is not found anywhere else, is preserved as "bikhado" by the Banganis. Likewise, the word *Vikrita* used in Vedic Sanskrit has been retained as "bikorto". While in their pronunciations the Banganis are closer to the Bengalis, according to Dr. Zoller there are no links between the two.

According to him, what has been preserved in Sanskrit grammar and literature is one standardised form of the language but what the Banganis speak is probably another dialect of the language from the times when it was in common use.

Though the Banganis do not believe in the theory of rebirth, there are various cultural links which they share with the Vedic civilisation. There is a particular game in which the loser is called "shuna shepa" a Puranic term meaning dog's tail. In the Vedic times there is reference to certain religious youth gangs who used to elect a person who lost in a dice game as their leader whom they called "shuna shepa". According to Dr. Zoller, it is not a mere coincidence that both used the term "shuna shepa" to depict a loser.

Some of the Kentum language traces in the Bangani vocabulary are words like "dakru" (meaning tear) in Kentum which is preserved by the Banganis as

“dokru”. It is also not surprising that there is no similar word in Sanskrit. Other such words are “ghostis” (meaning guest) in Kantum which has been preserved as “gosti” by the Banganis and “glak” (meaning milk) in Kentum as “lokto” in Bangani.

Significantly, while the Banganis can be broadly called Hindus because of the caste system which they follow, they do not worship gods of the Hindu pantheon like Shiva and Vishnu

The Banganis also have a peculiar caste system, where they have Brahmins, Rajputs and the lower castes which are called Kolta. The Rajputs are considered superior not because of their birth but because they are believed to be stronger and the Koltas weak. The Brahmins, however, have a very limited role to play in Bangani society. Interestingly, the Rajputs claim that the Brahmins had developed from among them, though they themselves concede that the Brahmins belong to a higher caste. Inter-marriage between the two castes is, however, not uncommon.

NEERAJ MAHAJAN

(*Sunday Mail*, Feb. 19-25, 1989, p. 1)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dr Zoller's discovery is certainly a very significant one, but he would be well advised not to proceed in his research on the assumption of an Aryan invasion of India in c. 1500 B.C. No archaeological or documentary evidence has yet been found for this assumption.

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1989)

THE Tantric cult played an important role in India during the later part of the classical age. The spiritual seeking of India took a particular turn towards the end of this age. The school of Buddhism along with Vaishnavism and Tantricism were sustaining the spirituality of the age when life seems to have been lived in its fullness. The mind was seeking to infuse its light of the spirit into the material outlook of man. When we turn the pages of history of India we can notice that the soul of India was born during the period of Veda and Upanishads from the spiritual discoverers and thinkers. From that period the soul of India was trying to manifest itself through the different schools of spiritual thought and philosophies with new elements in each succeeding age. It was a gradual development of spirit. In the words of Sri Aurobindo about the inner truth of all spiritual movements: "The Vedas and the Upanishads are not only the sufficient fountain-head of Indian philosophy and religion, but of all Indian art, poetry and literature. It was the soul, the temperament, the ideal mind formed and expressed in them which later carved out the great philosophies, built the structure of the Dharma, recorded its heroic youth in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, intellectualised indefatigably in the classical times of the ripeness of its manhood, threw out so many original intuitions in science, created so rich a glow of aesthetic and vital and sensuous experience, renewed its spiritual and psychic experience in Tantra and Purana, flung itself into grandeur and beauty of line and colour, hewed and cast its thought and vision in stone and bronze, poured itself into new channels of self-expression in the later tongues and now after eclipse re-emerges always the same in difference and ready for a new life and a new creation."¹

According to the saints of the medieval age the conception of the truth is one though expressed in different forms in all religions and philosophies. They preached to the people, irrespective of caste, creed or race, that life was a necessary condition for one's growth into a greater consciousness for which an absolute harmony between one's inner and outer existence is indispensable.

The Vaishnava and Tantric cults could establish and bring a new element by their mystical experiences joining inner and outer life. Sri Aurobindo reveals the meaning of the new element in Tantricism and Vaishnavism. His exposition runs: "The emotional, the sensuous, even the sensual motions of the being, before they could draw the soul farther outward, were taken and transmuted into a psychical form and, so changed, they became the elements of a mystic capture of the Divine through the heart and the senses and a religion of the joy of God's love, delight and beauty. In the Tantra the new elements are taken up and assigned their place in a complete psycho-spiritual and psycho-physical science of Yoga. Its popular form in the Vaishnava religion centres round the mystic apologue of the pastoral life of the child Krishna. In the Vishnu Purana the tale

of Krishna is a heroic saga of the divine Avatara; in later Puranas we see the aesthetic and erotic symbol developing and in the Bhagavat it is given its full power and prepared to manifest its entire spiritual and philosophic as well as its psychic sense and to remould into its own lines by a shifting of the centre of synthesis from knowledge to spiritual love and delight the earlier significance of Vedanta. The perfect outcome of this evolution is to be found in the philosophy and religion of divine love promulgated by Chaitanya.”²

Tantricism may be regarded as an ideal towards which the soul of India has been moving throughout her history. It is also a remarkable flowering of the Indian spirit, and another indication of the spiritual renaissance that was to take place as the crowning fruit of the creative efforts of the classical age from which Tantricism emerged as another cult.

“... the Tantric tradition leans on the Shakti or Ishwari aspect and makes all depend on the Divine Mother because its object is to possess and dominate the world-nature and arrive at the supreme realisation,”³ says Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo further comments: “In the Tantric method Shakti is all-important, becomes the key to the finding of spirit; in this synthesis spirit, soul is all-important, becomes the secret of the taking up of Shakti. The Tantric method starts from the bottom and grades the ladder of ascent upwards to the summit; therefore its initial stress is upon the action of the awakened Shakti in the nervous system of the body and its centres; the opening of the six lotuses is the opening up of the ranges of the power of Spirit.”⁴

Sri Aurobindo has said: “The Tantric system makes liberation the final, but not the only aim, it takes on its way a full perfection and enjoyment of the spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence, and even it has a glimpse of a supreme experience in which liberation and cosmic action and enjoyment are unified in a final overcoming of all oppositions and dissonances.”⁵

Tantricism is the most daring experiment of mankind and its rich synthesis aimed at producing an integral psychological development of all the planes of man's existence and its effect was felt in the later spiritual endeavours of the race. It largely contributed to the creation of art and learning which were found in the Pala period when Mahayana Buddhism was prevailing and the latter was another name for Tantricism. During the days of India's decline it was only the Tantric cults that kindled the fire of the national soul. The Tantras were the source for rebuilding modern India.

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD

TRANSLATED BY SATADAL FROM THE BENGALI OF NOLINI KANTA
GUPTA

Translator's Note

Sri Aurobindo wrote five "Conversations of the Dead" sometime in 1909-10—two of them published in Karmayogin and the rest in Standard Bearer—which afterwards came in book-form under the same title. They are included in Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL), Vol. 3. When Sri Aurobindo secretly left for Pondicherry via Chandernagore, Sister Nivedita took charge of Karmayogin and wrote three such conversations following Sri Aurobindo. Nolini-da translated all of them (five by Sri Aurobindo and three by Sister Nivedita) into Bengali and himself wrote thirteen similar conversations in Bengali which were published in the journals Bijali, Bharati, Pravartak, etc. during the 'fifties and this total number of twenty-one conversations came out in book-form Mriter Kathopakathan and was later included in his Rachanavali, Vol. 3 (It is interesting to note that the volume number of Sri Aurobindo's collected works in English and Nolini-da's in Bengali is the same, No. 3, in which these conversations appear.) Sometime in the beginning of this year B. D. Limaye, one of the old sadhaks of the Ashram from Maharashtra, met me near the Samadhi and quite unexpectedly urged me to translate these thirteen Bengali conversations by Nolini-da into English. I immediately started translating them. I gave a copy of my translation of the first one to K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) who liked it and wanted to publish it in Mother India. I hope to complete the translation of all the thirteen conversations by the Grace of the Divine Mother

Akbar, Aurangzeb

Akbar

My son, you have delayed what I had envisaged though you could not prove it to be wrong. You would probably be willing to admit now that your path was mistaken. India belongs to Indians, not to Hindus or Muslims, nor to any particular religion or community. If this fundamental principle is not adhered to, no order or system will survive for long in this country.

Aurangzeb

My ideal has not been crowned with success. But I don't believe that an ideal is necessarily wrong if it meets with failure or even repeated failures. I don't understand how a country can take shape without a particular religion or race. A country is not a piece of earth, nor a zoo for a variety of animals to roam about.

A life-force, a living unity and an awakened ideal must be the basis of a country. Whence will come that life-force, that unity or that ideal without a race or a religion?

Akbar

Why? A country is a country Just as there is a religion-sense or a race-sense, there is in the same way such a thing as a country-sense. You have to see these two things separately. Particularly in a country where numerous races and religions have infiltrated and co-existed, it is incumbent to build the country solely on the feeling of country-sense; it should not and cannot possibly be built on a religious or racial dogma?

Aurangzeb

A country-sense shorn of and separate from religion and race is a chimera, a sheer jugglery of the philosophical intellect. It is something unreal and non-existent. After all, what is meant by country-sense? A collectivity bred in the same education and culture, inspired by the same religious sentiment, united in a feeling of fraternity, living on a common piece of land. I do not esteem a fraternal bond which is not consanguineous, has no similarity in life and ideal; a fraternal feeling just because of living in the same place is not very strong and sublime according to me and I am not sure whether that ever happens.

Akbar

Well, look at the present-day world. Take Switzerland, for example. Three races—the French, the German and the Italian—and two principal sects—the Catholics and the Protestants co-exist. Next, take Ireland. There too a strong division of race and religion exists: the Ulsters and the Southern Gaelics. Of course Ireland is still in the way of being built, that's why there is still strife and struggle—but it won't be too long before a reconciliation and unity comes about. Next look at Canada. There the English and the French are equal in numbers. Belgium is yet another example. One half of its inhabitants are inspired by French culture and the other half are totally influenced by German culture.

Aurangzeb

All these examples are from countries of a lower order. It may be somehow possible to make a compromise and bring about a sham union of diverse ways shorn of their vigour and individuality, and build up a country devoid of vitality and proper sustenance, but to build a country full of life and creativity there must be cohesion, co-sentiment, unity in everything, a similarity in the life-ideal and a disciplined effort for manifesting it. Man is not a lifeless thing, but a living and integral being whose different parts are intermingled. To work with man, one must work with the whole of his being. I am sorry to repeat that if one puts aside

race-sense, religion-sense, social life and even the individual life, and chooses to be one with others and work by taking one's stand solely on the country-sense, one follows a vain fantasy. Religion is the fundamental principle in man's life: it is his soul-principle; it envelops and pervades man's within and without, and all the nooks and corners of his limbs. Man is not so philosophical as to be united in work in spite of a disunity in religion. That is why I know that if India does not want to perish, it must be either Hindu or Muslim. Hinduism has given India what it could give. The Hindu Shakti belongs to the past. I wanted to awaken India to a new life and culture and world with the Muslim force

Akbar

Even if I accept your idea that in order to be united the people of a country must find their unity in religion, I would like to ask you what you mean by religion. Haven't you yet realised that religion is diverse only externally and that in essence religion is one and that therefore all religions are true? It is the same Reality that Hindus name Bhagawan, Muslims call Khuda and Christians refer to as God. It was an age of ignorance when people used to quarrel and fight for the sake of the name without realising the significance. Religion is man's highest ideal and greatest aspiration. If you look deeply you will see that in all ages, countries, races and religions this ideal and aspiration have been almost identical. It did not vary much with time and space. The differences are only in minor details. For example, I like Kabab, you enjoy Kopta; that is simply a matter of taste, and to fight mortally over it is not a sign of intelligence. Similarly an individual's preference for a particular form of religion is a matter of his taste and temperament. If religion is there, if you follow a great ideal of life, then it is not very difficult to be liberal over the name and the manner in which it is going to be expressed—is it not a part of that religion, that ideal? To say that because the Hindus recite the *Gāyatri Mantra*, and don't recite from the Koran, they must go to hell—isn't that ignorance?

Aurangzeb

These are the words of a politician, not those of a man of religion. He alone can utter such words of indifference and timidity who has not felt the urge of religion, has not heard the direct command of Khuda. I know the inseparable relationship between truth and form. As the body cannot remain separated from the soul, similarly the rituals cannot be separated from a religion. A religion which is not firmly based on name and form, is something nebulous and questionable. Religion for life and work cannot exist without a particular name and form.

Akbar

You have not yet learnt your lesson. You have destroyed my huge empire and

haven't you yet realised why it was destroyed? I hope one day you will understand that an Indian is first an Indian, and then a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian.

Aurangzeb

I will not give up my ideal in spite of a thousand failures. I shall realise that the shortcoming lies not in the ideal but in my incapacity. If I am sent to India again, I will re-declare: "Indians! Be religious and Muslim first, then Indians."

Akbar

On reaching the earth you will see how much the meaning of religion has changed and how different has become man's way of looking at things. Religion is primarily concerned with personal life. But the basis of collective life is country-sense.

HAIKU

FATHER Sky disowned him,
Mother Earth welcomed him.
Ah! the dead leaf.

P. RAJA

AMERICA'S POET LAUREATE

New and Collected Poems by *Richard Wilbur* 393 pp San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. \$ 27.95.

THE poetry of Richard Wilbur, who has recently become the nation's poet laureate, has long been recognized as being graceful and technically accomplished. The publication of his *New and Collected Poems* is therefore an occasion to celebrate. The volume includes the complete texts of his six previous volumes, 23 new poems, three new translations and the text of the cantata "On Freedom's Ground" (done in collaboration with the composer William Schuman). The only omissions from this substantial collection are Mr. Wilbur's acclaimed verse translations of plays by Molière and Racine and his lyrics for the Broadway musical *Candide*.

This book reminds us that his verse expresses a very clear and thoughtful view of life. When he writes, in "Grasse: The Olive Trees," about how the landscape of southern France is "full / Of .. a heavy jammed excess," he could easily be referring to the "heavy jammed excess" of meaning in his verse:

Here luxury's the common lot. The light
Lies on the rain-pocked rocks like yellow wool
And around the rocks the soil is rusty bright
From too much wealth of water, so that the grass
Mashes under the foot, and all is full
Of heat and juice and a heavy jammed excess.

Like the olive, which "teaches the South it is not paradise," Mr. Wilbur's elegant verse reveals it is more than an Eden of beautiful language.

One of Mr. Wilbur's chief interests is the question of the propriety of using the external world to create meaning in poetry. He believes the poet is perfectly justified in altering reality for the sake of the poem. But he is also flexible in his views. Thus, although he will transform the olive into a metaphor for the mind and its "great thirst" for meaning, he is also receptive to those moments when the world defies the "cages of [his] thought." In "An Event," Mr. Wilbur tells how the "small black birds" roll

Like a drunken fingerprint across the sky!
Or so I give their image to my soul
Until, as if refusing to be caught
In any singular vision of my eye
Or in the nets and cages of my thought,

They tower up, shatter, and madden space
With their divergences.

His willingness to examine the difficulties of his aesthetic viewpoint gives his verse satisfying complexity.

The distinction Mr. Wilbur makes, in "A Summer Morning," between *possession* and *ownership* of the land, helps clarify his own attitude toward nature:

Her young employers, having got in late
From seeing friends in town
And scraped the right front fender on the gate,
Will not, the cook expects, be coming down.

She makes a quiet breakfast for herself.
The coffee-pot is bright,
The jelly where it should be on the shelf.
She breaks an egg into the morning light,

Then, with the bread-knife lifted, stands and hears
The sweet efficient sounds
Of thrush and catbird, and the snip of shears
Where, in the terraced backward of the grounds,

A gardener works before the heat of day.
He straightens for a view
Of the big house ascending stony-gray
Out of his beds mosaic with the dew.

His young employers having got in late,
He and the cook alone
Receive the morning on their old estate,
Possessing what the owners can but own.

Unlike the owners, who cannot spiritually possess the land, the cook and gardener are able to "receive the morning" properly.

"Worlds," one of the new poems here, revolves around the same theme. Mr. Wilbur contrasts Alexander the Great, conqueror of the known world, with Isaac Newton, who is far more content in his benevolent possession of the universe through knowledge:

For Alexander there was no Far East,
Because he thought the Asian continent

Ended with India. Free Cathay at least
Did not contribute to his discontent.

But Newton, who had grasped all space, was more
Serene To him it seemed that he'd but played
With a few shells and pebbles on the shore
Of that profundity he had not made.

Mr. Wilbur is preoccupied with the correct "possession" of nature because the transaction holds the possibility of spiritual release. In "Piazza di Spagna, Early Morning," a woman descending the Spanish Steps in Rome lifts the poet out of the world and himself:

I can't forget
How she stood at the top of that long marble stair
Amazed, and then with a sleepy piroquette
Went dancing slowly down to the fountain-quieted square;

Nothing upon her face
But some impersonal loneliness,—not then a girl,
But as it were a reverie of the place,
A called-for falling glide and whirl;

As when a leaf, petal, or thin chip
Is drawn to the falls of a pool and, circling a moment above it,
Rides on over the lip—
Perfectly beautiful, perfectly ignorant of it.

Such transfiguring instants—one also finds them in "Stop," "A Plain Song for Comadre," "A Glance From the Bridge" and "Transit"—do more than enliven a drab scene. Through these moments Mr. Wilbur registers his disagreement with the prevailing view of what truth is. The poet's desire to, as he puts it, "reach past rain" suggests that truth is more than what is found in the surfaces of reality.

Mr. Wilbur also enriches his verse by showing a willingness to face the dangers entailed in the quest for what Wallace Stevens called the "truth that cannot be arrived at by reason alone." The main peril, of course, is becoming too removed from reality. Mr. Wilbur's awareness of this problem has resulted in an even greater devotion in recent years to the "things of this world" (the phrase was the title of his third book)

Perhaps nothing in Mr. Wilbur's *œuvre* argues more eloquently for the value of ordinary life than poems such as "Running," "A Late Aubade," "For

Dudley” and “The Writer.” These poems focus on incidents requiring no transcendent vision. Here is “The Writer”:

In her room at the prow of the house
Where light breaks, and the windows are tossed with linden,
My daughter is writing a story.

I pause in the stairwell, hearing
From her shut door a commotion of typewriter-keys
Like a chain hauled over a gunwale.

Young as she is, the stuff
Of her life is a great cargo, and some of it heavy:
I wish her a lucky passage.

But now it is she who pauses,
As if to reject my thought and its easy figure.
A stillness greatens, in which

The whole house seems to be thinking,
And then she is at it again with a bunched clamor
Of strokes, and again is silent.

I remember the dazed starling
Which was trapped in that very room, two years ago;
How we stole in, lifted a sash

And retreated, not to affright it;
And how for a helpless hour, through the crack of the door,
We watched the sleek, wild, dark

And iridescent creature
Batter against the brilliance, drop like a glove
To the hard floor, or the desk-top,

And wait then, humped and bloody,
For the wits to try it again; and how our spirits
Rose when, suddenly sure,

It lifted off from a chair-back,
Beating a smooth course for the right window
And clearing the sill of the world.

It is always a matter, my darling,
Of life or death, as I had forgotten. I wish
What I wished you before, but harder.

What poems like "The Writer" stress, finally, is how tentative any poetic position must be if the poet wishes to remain truly open to the mystery and wonders of life.

Clearly, Mr Wilbur's poetry is rich in meaning. But even if there were no intellectual thread in his work, it would demand our attention. There is much to be said for a poet who refuses against all odds to allow his vision of hope (as manifested in the elegance and attractiveness of the verse) to die. If it were not for writers like him, future students might wonder if there were no poets in the late 20th century who championed beauty (as unlikely a cause as it may have been) or who were capable of rising above all the despair and doubt. Fortunately, we do have Richard Wilbur, and I am confident our age will be deemed the better for it.

ROBERT RICHMAN

(With acknowledgments to the New York Times Book Review, 29 May 1988)

GREEN PARROT

1. The Prelude

In the craggy harsh bark that baffles a predator
In the eyeless tunnel bored into a tree trunk
In the hollow curved out
In the primeval darkness
Is sown a seed of soft down
A greenness that is yet to be green
A dream laid out of invisible shapes
Of antique and modern aspirations
A motion that will tie up the ends of time
That streaks from horizon to horizon
In a single smooth harmony.

2. The Endeavour

The vision that was the immediate boon
The luminous gaze a mother of creation
Throbs in the mystic ether emerald green
An act of spontaneity and fulfilment
Yet the fledgling life is a labour towards
Its vermilion and green completeness
A preliminary sketch with hesitant strokes
An artist's palette with undecipherable colour-forms
An entrant life peeping at the astonished world
And desiring to drink a ray of sunlight with its open beak
And clamouring for the earth to hear its untrained voice
A message bursting upon the world.

3. The Enchantment

A red crescent girdling its ever-green breast
The gleaming arc of perfection half-revealed
Of honeyed words of love a moiety left concealed
A broken circle more pronounced by the hiatus
Its dark round eyes in trance veiled with the mist-hued orbs
Brood on the blue canopy of vast expanse
Its flaming beak curved like the hemisphere's dipping rim

Cherishes the ambrosial taste of the virgin fruits of paradisiac
earth

A harbinger comet's dash its green tail

A trail of journey forward

An epilogue of a formal balance and elusive harmony.

4. The Adventure

Green parrot

Green parrot of everlasting beauty

A bird and not a mere bird

A symbol of verdant nature desiring to soar in the firmament

And taste the thrill of a soul's release

Its wing-beats a youth-challenge to prevail and overcome

Its cry an awakener in broad daylight

SAMIR KANTA GUPTA

NEW AGE NEWS

COMPILED AND PRESENTED BY WILFRIED

(Continued from the issue of May 1989)

Underwater Meditation

NOTHING is impossible in America... Amos Nachoum from New York practises underwater meditation. Diving some 15m under the surface, he feels happily relaxed as in a womb. Marian Rivman too is a sport diver from New York. She says that ten minutes of underwater meditation give her the benefit of one hour on land. "I feel the quintessential me underwater, a cell in a vast universe."

Physiologists believe the silent environment of the ocean, coupled with the sensation of almost no gravity, provides an ideal stimulation for meditational experience. However, imitators are warned by experts that they should practise under the supervision of a companion who keeps an eye on Time whilst they merge into the big Womb.

Holistic Animal News

Now it is the turn of animals to benefit from the new holistic [integral] outlook. There are some two dozen organizations in the States that provide alternative food, medicine and medical treatment for animals. The American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, for instance, "explores non-traditional techniques in veterinary medicine, including nutrition, homeopathy, and acupuncture..." Nature's Herb Company treats your pet's problem on a herbal basis, while Holistic Animal News gives comprehensive advice on natural, non-toxic approaches to animal care.

Progressive dogs, cats and horses will appreciate this service. Animals are often kept under intolerable conditions in agricultural factories (invented in Japan) in the West, so much so that they only survive with the help of tranquilizers. All this is going to be changed now in Sweden where a Bill of Rights for animals has been passed. A moving force behind it was the well-known writer Astrid Lindgren.

Under the new regulations animals are assured of a minimum of natural existence. Thus cows must be allowed to graze, pigs must have separate spaces for feeding and bedding and it is prohibited to pump them full of antibiotics and hormones. Moreover, all animals must be protected from unnecessary suffering when being slaughtered.

NEWSWEEK (7-11-88) comments in its article on the "Barnyard Bill of Rights":

“Asked Sven Erik Jansson, spokesman for the Federation of Swedish Farmers: ‘Just exactly how can you tell whether a pig is happy?’ If he’s in Sweden, you can guess he probably is.”

Prenatal Audition

Prof. Joachim-Ernst Berendt is a leading German expert on the spiritual aspects of music. He has published books such as “Nada-Brahman—The World is Sound” or “The Third Ear” and brought out a meditation cassette “The Ear is the Path”. In the October ‘88 issue of *Magazin 2000* he reviews a book by the French doctor and ear specialist Alfred A. Tomatis, titled “The Sound of Life”. Berendt has made some interesting observations in his article which are worth noting.

According to Tomatis the Sound of Life is a distant, low rustling which the human embryo is intent on hearing. Even when it is still smaller than a centimetre, it starts with the initial formation of the ears, and the proper hearing organ (cochlea) is formed after four and a half months—in its final size, quite unlike all other human organs.

Once Tomatis and some other doctors were examining an autistic child which had grown up in Paris and had only listened to French speech. It was totally incapable of reacting to its surroundings, but while being examined, the child suddenly showed a clear reaction when someone entered and by chance said something in English. Tomatis at once said to the father that the child must have heard English language when his mother was expectant. But the father denied that there was any such possibility. However, later it turned out that the mother had worked with an import-export company at that time, where they spoke English exclusively. This was during the first three months, even before the cochlea was fully developed.

Now Berendt draws a very significant conclusion: “Tomatis’ book *The Sound of Life* is also a book for expectant mothers. You have never before read this as impressively: the foetus and the embryo are listening. Therefore, be careful, mothers, about what you say. Be conscious: in every single word you speak you also talk to the baby growing in you. Therefore, don’t confine yourselves to merely letting the baby listen. Enter into communication with it! Speak to it! Let it listen to good music! Protect it from all the nonsense blaring out of the TV and radio loudspeakers! Don’t think that this or that music is too complicated, not comprehensible by that little being. The best music is just good enough for him.” [English translation mine]

We can assume that the Mother of mothers would have been pleased when reading these lines. The following quotation from her writings illustrates how close Berendt has come to her own position, expressed decades ago:

“Indeed, if we want this education to have its maximum result, it

should begin even before birth.... For it is certain that the nature of the child to be born depends very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspirations and will as well as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. To see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of a great simplicity—this is the part of education which should apply to the mother herself.” (*How to bring up a child*, p. 10)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Vignettes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: 360 True Stories by Shyam Kumari.
Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press. Rs. 35.

SHYAM Kumari's book *Vignettes* is like a *Purāna* of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. They soften and open the heart and whether we have known Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the flesh or not, they open a door onto a world that emanates their sweetness.

At the beginning one has the sense that the stories spin a thread out of Their divine dimension. As you read on, the thread is woven into silk that wraps itself around your heart.

The Mother is the Mother of the world. Within this world there is her special family and she protects its members in a special way. Children, cows, donkeys, squirrels, trees, vegetables and flowers are shown to be recipients of a special Grace when they come to her. And what a shame all of them cannot tell their stories from their point of view!

Though these three hundred and sixty stories must make up an infinitesimal part of the stories that could be told about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, still one gets the sense of a many-armed goddess disbursing boons at every level. There is the old servant who remembers the Mother serving him milk with both hands, she fed a crow each day and her pet lizard, presumably her squirrel too whom she strove to save from being trapped and deported with the others and she could even run to save a rose. And then there are the stories of the blessings packets—how many thousands did she hold out in her soft hands like the Divine's rupee notes, as one of our poets has said!

So many things she did to make us understand. To make good the promise of a disciple she worked in realms normally she would avoid—

“Once there was a severe drought in one of the princely states of India. In desperation they tried *Yagnas* and help was solicited from saints and pirs. But still no rain. The Minister of the state, who was a devotee of the Mother suggested to the ruler that her help was sure to succeed. The ruler himself did not know the Mother, so he asked the Minister to intercede on his behalf. The Minister came to Pondicherry and went to the Mother. He said, ‘Mother, I have come...’ but before he could complete his sentence the Mother interrupted him and said, ‘Yes, I know and it is done. It has rained there. But in future do not do such a thing. Since you have assured your ruler that I could do it, I had to do it for your sake. But these things are the domain of the gods and it is not right to interfere.’” (pp. 118-119)

To quote is dangerous, you want to quote another and another. One last story though—

How Much She Loved

When the Mother used to distribute flowers to the Ashramites, she sometimes had to stand for hours on end. M noticed that the Mother's legs were swollen, and pointed out the swelling to the Mother. The Mother smiled sweetly and told her, "Because I have to stand for hours, there is no proper circulation." Then she held out her hands to M to show how they had become blue and bruised as the disciples clutched them so tightly. M was aghast. She told the Mother, "I'll tell everyone that they should not clutch or press your hands." The Mother forbade her to say anything to anybody. She explained, "People hold on to me because of their love and devotion." (p. 34)

It is to be hoped that this small book will encourage many others to send their stories to Shyam Kumari to include in book after book.

MAGGI

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Sixty-fifth Seminar

19 February 1989

(Continued from the issue of May 1989)

THE MOTHER—CREATRIX OF THE NEW AGE

Speech read by Devanshu Arya

THE New Age of which the Mother is the creatrix is the age of the Supermind which is the next stage in the evolution beyond mind. But the Supermind whose manifestation will create this New Age is so radically different from the present human mind even at its best, that to most people it seems to be an impossibility, only a beautiful dream, an enchanting utopia, something that can never be realised upon earth.

This view is shared by three categories of people. There are, first, the practical matter-of-fact people whose outlook is so narrow and limited that anything beyond it seems to them impossible to achieve. Then there are the modern scientists who take a materialistic view of the world and to whom anything spiritual is a delusion of the mind. Lastly, even among the spiritual teachers, there are some like Buddha and Shankara who proclaim that the world itself is an illusion, that there can be no higher evolution upon earth and that the only way to get out of it is to escape into Nirvana or the silent immutable Brahman which alone is Real. All these three types of people dismiss the possibility of the creation of any new evolutionary age as a chimera, a vain dream.

But is it not a fact that the attitude of all such people is only a sign of their mental incapacity to look beyond the present actualities? Have they not always dismissed as an impossibility, a dream, every new evolutionary possibility before it was actually realised? So many things, in every sphere of life, which were considered impossible yesterday have been realised and have become common-places of today. Every time someone conceives of a new idea, people call it a dream, but later generations see the dream becoming a concrete reality.

It is this mental incomprehension and blind ignorance that stands in the way of accepting the emergence of the supramental age as the next stage of terrestrial evolution. But if we interpret this evolution not only in its external physical aspect as modern science does, but in its real inner significance as an evolution of

consciousness, then higher and higher degrees of consciousness must successively emerge in it and the next higher degree being the supramental, its advent must be accepted as an inevitable certainty.

I quote here an extremely significant passage from a letter of Sri Aurobindo in which he states this point very decisively:

“The descent of the supramental is an inevitable necessity in the logic of things and is therefore sure. It is because people do not understand what the supermind is or realise the significance of the emergence of consciousness in a world of inconscient Matter that they are unable to realise this inevitability. I suppose a matter-of-fact observer, if there had been one at the time of the unrelieved reign of inanimate Matter in the earth’s beginning, would have criticised any promise of the emergence of life in a world of dead earth and rock and mineral as an absurdity and a chimera; so too, afterwards he would have repeated this mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimera. It is the same now with the appearance of supermind in the stumbling mentality of this world of human consciousness and its reasoning ignorance.”¹

However, if we understand the word ‘dream’ in a different sense, there can be no objection to calling the creation of the supramental age a ‘dream’ of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. For example, when someone said that the Mother’s magnificent conception of Auroville (which has an integral place in her creation of the supramental age) was only a ‘dream’, she replied:

“You say that Auroville is a dream. Yes, it is a ‘dream’ of the Lord and generally these ‘dreams’ turn out to be *true*—much more true than the human so-called realities.”² (20.5.1966)

I give another example. In the message, which Sri Aurobindo gave on the 15 August 1947 which was his 75th birthday and also the birthday of free India, he spoke of his five ‘dreams’. But surely they were not mere unreal fancies or unsubstantial imaginations. On the contrary, as he himself says in that message, they were world-movements which were “arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement.”³ And the creation of the supramental age in collaboration with the Mother was the last and the greatest of his ‘dreams’. But then we must remember that it is the ‘dream’ of Sri Aurobindo, the Supreme Lord, and therefore it must inevitably fulfil itself. He himself confirms this in one of his letters which I quote:

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 22), pp 8-9

² *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 13, p 197

³ *On Himself* (Cent Ed , Vol 26), p 404

“I have never known any will of mine for any major event in the conduct of world-affairs to fail in the end, although it may take a long time for the world-forces to fulfil it.”¹

The Mother also, in a short piece of writing which she herself has titled “A Dream”, reveals to us her conception of an ideal society—not the supramental society itself but a society like our Ashram which will prepare the best conditions for its advent. It is so inspiring that I would like to read it out to you in full.

“There should be somewhere on earth a place which no nation could claim as its own, where all human beings of goodwill who have a sincere aspiration could live freely as citizens of the world and obey one single authority, that of the supreme truth; a place of peace, concord and harmony where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weaknesses and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the concern for progress would take precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the search for pleasure and material enjoyment. In this place, children would be able to grow and develop integrally without losing contact with their souls; education would be given not for passing examinations or obtaining certificates and posts but to enrich existing faculties and bring forth new ones. In this place, titles and positions would be replaced by opportunities to serve and organise; the bodily needs of each one would be equally provided for, and intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority would be expressed in the general organisation not by an increase in the pleasures and powers of life but by increased duties and responsibilities. Beauty in all its artistic forms, painting, sculpture, music, literature, would be equally accessible to all, the ability to share in the joy it brings would be limited only by the capacities of each one and not by social or financial position. For in this ideal place money would no longer be the sovereign lord; individual worth would have a far greater importance than that of material wealth and social standing. There, work would not be a way to earn one’s living but a way to express oneself and to develop one’s capacities and possibilities while being of service to the community as a whole, which, for its own part, would provide for each individual’s subsistence and sphere of action. In short, it would be a place where human relationships, which are normally based almost exclusively on competition and strife, would be replaced by relationships of emulation in doing well, of collaboration and real brotherhood.

“The earth is certainly not ready to realise such an ideal, for mankind does not yet possess sufficient knowledge to understand and adopt it nor the conscious force that is indispensable in order to execute it; that is why I call it a dream.

“And yet this dream is in the course of becoming a reality; that is what we

¹ *Ibid* , p 55

are striving for in Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, on a very small scale, in proportion to our limited means. The realisation is certainly far from perfect, but it is progressive; little by little we are advancing towards our goal which we hope we may one day be able to present to the world as a practical and effective way to emerge from the present chaos, to be born into a new life that is more harmonious and true."¹

This is the Mother's dream of an ideal society which will be a preparation for the birth of the New Age of the Supramental Truth. But, as the Mother herself assures us, though it is a dream it is in the course of becoming a reality. And she has repeatedly given us the call to make ourselves ready, to prepare ourselves for it.

So the best way to utilise this occasion of her birthday, which we are celebrating in this Seminar, is to respond to her call, to prepare ourselves for the advent of the New Age. This is our responsibility and it is only if we earnestly fulfil it that we can truly call ourselves her children.

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 12, pp 93-4